Brotherhood---All Year Round

The Southern PATRIOT

Volume 7 | New Orleans, Louisiana, February, 1949 | No. 2

THE MEANING OF BROTHERHOOD IN 1949

By DR. JULIAN B. FEIBLEMAN

BROTHERHOOD is a matter of consistency of purpose. Most of us believe in it, but we fall short in practicing it. In the abstract it is noble and appealing. In the concrete it is hesitant and unresolved.

The same not only may be said of our Democracy, but must be said. Nor may we leave out Religion.

The combination of Brotherhood Democracy and Religion would change our world today from shadow to substance.

It is not that we lack the tools, but that we lack the will to use them. We have been shown the way in every document that we hold sacred, whether it be in Religion or in political philosophy. In fact we have the plans, but we lack the workers with convictions and positive attitudes.

Therefore, every word, gesture or deed that can be uttered or performed for a great future must be made today.

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Our weakness abroad is the reflection of our glaring inconsistency within our own nation. We cannot expect a world to subscribe to our way, unless our way be worthy of example as well as of duplication.

Everything in science, culture, politics and economics has thrown us into one another's lap. The social demands of our times, and of tomorrow, must be as evident to all who profess to think as the other avenues of human endeavor. These are no longer abstract, objective nor meaningless exploits of mind. They are practical devices to forestall chaos, and to improve the human order.

The fate of man hangs breathless—waiting for you to take your brother by the hand and walk forward.

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By DR. BENJAMIN E. MAYS

THE meaning of brotherhood in 1949 is not different from its meaning in any other period. But since we are so far away from true brotherhood we might indicate a few things which if they happened would further the brotherhood idea in 1949.

I begin with the Church because it is the Church's business not only to preach brotherhood but to practice it. It has a mandate from God to deal brotherly with all peoples. All peoples should be allowed to worship God in God's house on a basis of absolute equality. Brotherhood would mean something in 1949 if the ministers of America made a declaration that their Churches were opened to all who cared to worship. If this were done, it would make no great difference in practice. Each Sunday morning the Negro ministers would preach wholly or mainly to Negroes and the white ministers would preach wholly or mainly to white people. Occasionally, a few white people would worship in a Negro church and a few Negroes would worship in a white church. On special occasions there might be more people of each racial group worshipping together. But by and large things would move on as now.

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Do you ask what good would that do? Psychologically and actually, it would do a tremendous amount of good. It would take the stigma off the Church of being the most segregated institution in America. Brotherhood would take a step forward. The Church would then be in a position to lead the secular order in matters of this kind. Frankly, I am definitely of the opinion that the Church can hardly call itself Christian until barriers of race and class are completely broken.

Since segregation is the greatest barrier to brotherhood, the Federal Government should further the idea by abolishing it in 1949 in all Federal Agencies, beginning in the Nation's Capital.

The Meaning Of Brotherhood

By DR. JOHN B. THOMPSON

1949 IS going to be a tough year.. But there is one clear and present gain in which we may rejoice: the world is in no mood to accept any counterfeit or "phony" forms of brotherhood. Thank God we can no longer fool anyone by substituting high-sounding talk about brotherhood for the actual conditions of brotherhood. We are probably no better than our fathers, but it is more difficult in our day to be successful hypocrites!

Today the test of our faith in brotherhood is action.

Our native fascists, like the foreign fascists, would like to keep us divided: white against black, Gentile against Jew, Protestant against Catholic. **"Divide and rule"** has always been a good formula for the enemies of democracy and for the enemies of the people.

Therefore real brotherhood — expressed materially as well as spiritually —is now the A-1 priority of our democracy and of our religion. Unless we greatly extend the achievement of brotherhood in this country we shall fail to deliver our faith from charges of hypocricy; we shall betray the fulfillment of our own democracy; we shall lose, by default, our moral leadership among nations.

Members of minority races, of course, must struggle to win their rights as citizens and as human beings. But we who happen (by accident of birth) to belong to a majority have an even greater moral obligation to labor for the full and fair distribution of rights to all men. We who are white have a special responsibility to seek to abolish all forms of segregation and discrimination. We who are Christian must prove our faith in one God, in one world, and in one destiny.

We must accept nothing for ourselves which we are not willing to work for all men to have. This is our faith. And now, as always, the test of faith is action.

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By CHARLES C. WEBBER

JESUS, the Carpenter of Nazareth, made it very plain centuries ago that all men and women should love God with all their heart, soul and mind and their neighbors as themselves.

James, the brother of Jesus, recognized that it was not enough, however, for an individual or for a group of men and women (such as a church group or a labor group for example) to hear or to read the "Great Commandments." He maintained that people should be "doers of the word not hearers only."

In line with the ideas expressed in these statements by Jesus and James, "The Meaning of Brotherhood in 1949." as far as I am concerned, is best expressed in daily resolutions to obey the "Great Commandments," not only by giving verbal assent to them but also by putting them into actual practice in my own daily living and into the daily actions of the trade union groups with which I am associated.

Specifcially what do these daily resolutions call for on my part?

1. They urge upon me that I eradicte all my emotions of hatred of and of hostility toward my fellow human beings purely because of their race, creed, sex or national origin.

2. They require that I refuse to practice segregation of myself from my fellow human beings of a different skin color at public meetings in publicly owned buildings, and while traveling upon the public carriers such as streetcars, busses, railroad trains and steamboats. They require that I endeavor to persuade the trade union group with which I am associated to refrain from maintaining segregated locals, meetings and banquets.

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3. They make it imperative for me to voice a protest and to cooperate with others in making a public protest whenever I observe unjust treatment of an individual or of a group because of race, creed or national origin.

4. They insist that I should do all that I possibly can to bring about the repeal of Virginia's laws requiring segregation on streetcars, busses, railroad trains and steamboats and at public meetings in publicly owned buildings.

5. They compel me to participate in political action—to engage in campaigns to get all of our Virginia CIO members to pay their poll taxes, to register and to become first class voting citizens—so that we can elect state and federal legislators pledged to enact a thorough-going federal and state civil rights program.

The Southern PATRIOT

VOL. 7 FEBRUARY, 1949 No. 2

THE SOUTHERN PATRIOT published monthly ten times a year by The Southern Conference Educational Fund, Inc., 808 Perdido Street, New Orleans 12, Louisiana. Twenty-five cents a copy, $2.00 a year. Entered as second-class mail matter October 5, 1946, at the Postoffice, New Orleans, Louisiana under the Act of March 3, 1879.

THE SOUTHERN CONFERENCE EDUCATIONAL FUND, INC.

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MOMENT OF FREEDOM

By BETTINE GOODALL

THE day was stiflingly hot and a relentless July sun beat down on the lonely Georgia road, making the dust particles seem more burning and scratchy than usual. Sweat rolled and dripped from every pore of the young man who trod this road, yet he seemed not to mind the intensity of the sun nor the feel of the dust which clung to his brown skin. He was, in fact quite unaware of his surroundings and his discomfort because his mind was deep in thought. Today he had registered in the primaries of his native state. All the fears and horrible expectations of the past weeks were suddenly sloughed from his shoulders and he now wore a new mantle of right and privilege.

How many nights had he tossed fitfully in bed weighing his decision against its possible consequences. How much sleep had been lost during hours spent envisioning terror and revenge.

As things turned out, the event of his registration had not been as momentous as he anticipated. There were no hooded figures or whispered warnings to test his courage at the last minute; in fact, there had been nothing save a few hostile stares to make him feel so very different.

The man stopped a moment to contemplate the dark cloud which was rolling toward the sun. He wiped the sweat from his hatband and continued towards home, likened the cloud to his action today. One brought him relief from the hot glare of the sun, while the other brought respite from the weight of oppression which he as a black man of the South felt acutely. After all, he mused, perhaps things really were getting better for his race. Ten years ago a Negro couldn't have gone near a registration book without being openly threatened. He remembered his father's grim warning that to vote was to invite at best a beating and at worst a lynching.

During his four years in the army this man had on many occasions discussed the race question with a variety of his people from all parts of the country. He had even talked about it with white enlisted men who seemed genuinely interested in seeing the Negro get a beter deal. Over a period of time he had evolved the philosophy that all progress was slow, but he was also firmly convinced that every black man held within the palm of his hand a part of the destiny of true emancipation for his race. He had come to realize that there was a battle to be fought, and he was intensely aware of the responsibility of each individual if the struggle were to be won. Had he failed to register today, he would have been shirking his duty, and he knew that the reason he felt so good now was he had responded to the call.

Suddenly this man felt like singing a mighty song, for today he was whole, a citizen, and a part of something big. He quickened his step and hummed at first softly, then in mellow cadences, rising in crescendo as he neared home. It was thus that his wife heard him and a great weight was lifted from her heart, for she knew that he had gained something. She had known no peace since the day he had told her of his decision to register and vote in the elections, and she remembered other women who had lost their men for lesser infractions of the white man's law. During the week gone by her heart had often cried out to beg him not to do this thing, but her mind knew that to put another obstacle in his way would be a terrible injustice. With the great wisdom and patience that were a part of her racial heritage, she knew that of all people she should not stand in the way of this man's courage.

All that was over now, and a black man, his wife, and their son knew happiness and relief on a midsummer day in Georgia. The man walked through his gate proudly, the wife smiled at him warmly and lovingly, and the chubby fingers of the little boy grasped for a lock of his father's curly black hair.

Four days passed and the event of this man's registering to vote was almost forgotten. As he resumed the normal pattern of his daily life, the day of its happening faded in his memory, leaving only a glow of satisfaction when he purposely recalled it to consciousness. Then on the evening of the fifth day, just as the sun was sinking in beautiful vivid hues behind the horizon, a car drew up to his house and a harsh voice demanded to see that nigger who registered. He arose and came to the door. He hesitated wistfully as he glimpsed the stricken face of his young wife and heard the innocent gurgle of his son. Although he spoke no word his glance seemed to drink in the sight of his family and enfold them to him forever, as he quietly stepped from the doorway and started toward the car. It was then that five shots shattered the tranquil summer evening, and a man who had dared hope fell silently on his face in the Georgia dirt. The men in the car fired two more shots into the dead body. "Teach them goddam niggers what their place is" was what one of them said and then they were gone.

The little boy in his mother's arms started to whimper for he was not accustomed to the grating noises of hatred. He buried his face against the warmth of her shoulder, and the soft brown eyes of the woman were lifted once more toward the sky, as if seeking from God a reason.

From the Atlanta Constitution, Sept. 12, ~~1949~~. (1948?)

MOUNT VERNON, Sept. 11.—(AP)—Montgomery County Sheriff R. M. McCrimmon said today a Negro father of six children died Friday in a Dublin hospital after being shot because he insisted on his right to vote in the Georgia Democratic Primary Wednesday. The Negro was Isaiah Nixon, 28, of Alston according to the Sheriff.

Sheriff McCrimmon said he is holding Johnnie Johnson, 22, of Alston, a logger, on a charge of accessory to murder and is seeking to arrest his brother, M. A. Johnson, on a charge of murder.

The Sheriff said he was told that Nixon went to the polling place in Alston Wednesday and wanted to know if he could vote.

Nixon was told, the Sheriff said, that he had the right to vote but was advised not to do so.

The Negro insisted on voting anyway, the Sheriff said, and that night the two Johnson brothers went to Nixon's home where he lived with his wife and six children.

It was then, the Sheriff said, that M. A. Johnson fired three shots into Nixon. The wounded man was taken to Claxton Hospital in Dublin, where he died.

The Sheriff said that Johnnie Johnson said that he and his brother had gone to the home of the Negro to get Nixon to work for them and that his brother fired in self-defense.

From the Columbia, S. C. Lighthouse & Informer, Nov. 11, 1948.

MT. VERNON, Ga.—Two white men charged with the fatal shooting of Isaiah Nixon, 28-year-old Alston, Ga., voter, following the September 8, state primary, Thursday were acquitted by an all-white jury in Montgomery County Superior Court, Judge Echol Graham presided.

The Montgomery County grand jury Monday had indicted M. A. Johnson for murder in the fatal shooting of Nixon and his brother Johnnie Johnson, for being an accessory to the murder, but Thursday, in a short trial, the two white men were acquitted.